ABERDEEN PHILATELIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER January 2021

A letter from the President.

Fellow Members: Welcome to the second half of this season's programme of socially distanced activities. Many of us have learned to participate in zoom meetings, sometimes with attendees from far away, and for those of us who cannot attend our zoom meetings, copy of the visual aids is available on the MEETINGS tab of the APS website (https://www.aberdeenphilatelic.org.uk/). We have run 6 presentation events and a live zoom auction which raised funds for the society. My thanks to all who have played a part in programming and displaying in these events. Sadly the virus appears to have too much energy to disappear in the near future, so we must expect to continue our zoom presentations for the remainder of this season (and possibly into next). Alterations to the programme will be advised in advance on the website. Next events are:

14th January – What did you do in lockdown? (maximum 5 slides)

28th January – President's Night – Unravelling British Borneo.

I look forward to seeing those of you who can zoom at our meetings. Meanwhile, please stay safe and well, and have a good 2021. Best Regards, Michael Hart, President - APS

The **Packet Secretary** reports that there are four packets in circulation and another four to be circulated, so here is another way that we can remain active despite the covid restrictions. In case you are not on the list to receive the packet and would like to see a large quantity of stamps for sale in your own home, contact Fred Jefferies at fredjefferies@btinternet.com. If the covid situation means more free time at home then how about disposing of some of your duplicates by making up a booklet or two for circulation in the packet? Again, contact Fred for advice.

The **Postal Auction Secretary** reports that our postal auction number 35 will be held on 18th March 2021. The catalogue will be distributed in February and will appear on our website. Deadline for receipt of items for inclusion is 21st January 2021. Further advice on minimum reserves etc., from longhurst2@hotmail.co.uk.

The zoom auctioneer reports. Following our savvy members getting to grips with Zoom meetings in October , November and December, I somehow found myself volunteering to run a fun auction for the last meet of 2020. Thanks to 17 members who scanned or gave me 50 lots in good time, I prepared a PowerPoint catalogue of the material which I sent by email, with paper copies by post to the non- internet members. Some 24 Members turned up on the night, ready to wave large paddle numbers, since the Gallery windows on Zoom are quite small, and half a dozen others sent in phone or email bids. Bidding was lively and as rank amateur auctioneer I occasionally missed a bid. Fortunately our treasurer Graham was able to correct my mistakes and also to do the bookwork on invoices. Forty-one lots sold for over £220. We took no commissions from vendors and generous donations of £59 meant we were able to cover postage costs on out-of-town packages and still add a contribution to club funds. Winning lots were delivered or posted by 21st Dec (I can only hope that, despite the absence of airmail flights by Trans-Buchan Airways, the mailed lots arrived safely in good time) My thanks to all vendors and purchasers, for a fun auction. Let's have another one!

I was intrigued by an article in *Stamp Collector* for December 2020 entitled '**Mixed Frankings'**, in other words covers with the correct postal rates made up with stamps from different issues. The author had recently published a book entitled *Great Britain Victorian*

Mixed-Franking Covers which evidently goes into the subject in great depth based on many years of research, but by way of introduction to the article, they make the point that many combinations are numerically rare but nevertheless they can be found in dealers' boxes or on eBay at modest prices. They don't automatically attract prices reflecting the rarity of the particular combinations. It occurs to me that this is a collecting possibility which applies to almost any country, not just to GB. There is scope for a new side-line collection in your favourite country, or in a different country which you have not collected seriously. Some preliminary searches on my part suggest that mixed frankings of commemorative and definitive stamps are rather more frequently encountered than mixed frankings of different definitive series which are only likely when one definitive set is replaced by another. Commemorative sets with only a few values are more likely to be supplemented with definitives to make up higher rates. This suggests that a decision is called for in collecting mixed frankings. Restrict it to definitives or include commemoratives. Also, older definitives in combination are more difficult to find than more recent series. Perhaps better not to restrict at the outset. Reducing the scope will always be possible at a later date, in the (unlikely?) event that you find too many. Anyone care to comment? Your thoughts in the next newsletter.

Editor's Further Ramblings. I have been reading a book entitled 'Blue Mauritius – the Hunt for the World's Most Valuable Stamps' by Helen Morgan, which is a well-researched account of the provenance of all the known examples of the two Post Office Mauritius stamps of 1847. I bought in the Society zoom auction last month. On page 128, I came across the following written in the context of finds of rare stamps amongst old business correspondence:

> In 1920 philatelic journalist Fred Melville travelled up to Scotland to give a lecture to the Aberdeen and North of Scotland Philatelic Society on the fascination of stamp collecting. The *Aberdeen Daily Journal* reported on his talk:
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> Mr Melville said Scotland ought to be a happy hunting ground for collectors of old stamps. He had been in Aberdeen since Tuesday morning and had noticed many legal gentlemen. A large number of these must be in possession of old correspondence and letters which had accumulated since 1840, with stamps of that period. In those days there were no such things as envelopes. People simply folded their letters and affixed the stamps to the sheets, so that where old letters had been kept the stamps too would have been preserved.

I checked the Society archive and found that the first meeting of the 1920-21 season was indeed addressed by 'Fred J Melville, London, President of the Junior Philatelic Society'. It was an open meeting held in the Ball Room, Music Hall Buildings, Union Street. The subject was "Old Classics" illustrated with lantern slides. The Society minutes read: 'Mr Melville in his opening remarks dealt with the fascination of stamp collecting, and traced the origin, development and uses of stamps. Mr Melville exhibited on the screen upwards of 50 slides, embracing 65 items. The slides were arranged in two parts. Part one relating to 'Great Britain', and, part two 'Foreign Stamps and the Stamps of British Colonies'. Among the slides were representations of a number of rarities including a few specimens from the collection of his Majesty King Geo. V'.

I find myself wondering whether one hundred years on from the use of lantern slides to illustrate a talk, whether in recent years we are not making enough use of power point or other modern visual aids at our meetings.